DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 564 PS 016 855

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TITLE Child Support and Alimony: 1985. (Advance Data from March-April 1986 Current Population Surveys). Special Studies.
INSTITUTION Bureau of the Census (DOC), Suitland, Md. Population Div.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Child Support Enforcement (DHHS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Aug 87
NOTE 29p.
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (Stock No. 803-005-10005-7, $1.50).
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Current Population Reports; series P-23 n152 Aug 1987

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Divorce; *Family Income; Family Problems; *Females; National Surveys; *One Parent Family; *Parents; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS *Alimony; *Child Support; Property Disposition

ABSTRACT

One of a series, this report presents information on the receipt by women of support payments, both those which follow divorce and separation and those for children of never-married women. The report includes information on the award and actual receipt by women of child support and alimony. The report also provides data concerning receipt and type of property settlement for women who have been divorced at some point. Information included in the report is based on advance findings from the 1986 survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census through questions supplementing the April 1986 Current Population Survey. All women 18 years of age and older were within the sampling universe for the supplemental questions. In addition to 11 text tables, the report provides five detailed tables. Appendices include definitions and explanations of terms and computations, and technical information concerning the source and reliability of estimates. A newsletter summarizing the findings is included with the report. (RH)

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Child Support and Alimony: 1985

(Advance Data from March-April 1986 Current Population Surveys)

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Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by **Ruth Armfield Sanders** of the Income Statistics Branch of Population Division. **Mary F. Henson** contributed to the preparation and statistical review of the text. The report was prepared under the general direction of **John F. Coder**, Chief of the Income Statistics Branch. Sampling review was conducted by **Louis E. Williams** of the Statistical Methods Division. Overall direction was provided by **Gordon W. Green, Jr.**, Assistant Division Chief (Socioeconomic Statistics Programs), Population Division.

Data collection was conducted by Bureau of the Census interviewers under the overall direction of **Stanley D. Matchett**, Chief, Field Division. Publication planning, design, composition, editorial review, and printing planning and procurement were provided by the staff of Publications Services Division, **Walter C. Odom**, Chief.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement of the Department of Health and Human Services co-sponsored the survey on which the findings in this report are based.

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

Special Studies

Series P-23, No.152
Issued August 1987

Child Support and Alimony: 1985

(Advance Data from March-April 1986 Current Population Surveys)

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SUGGESTED CITATION

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 152, *Child Support and Alimony: 1985 (Advance Data From March-April 1986 Current Population Surveys)*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1987.

For sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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Symbols Used in Tables

–	Represents zero or rounds to zero.
B	Base is less than 75,000.
X	Not applicable.

Child Support and Alimony: 1985 (Advance Report)

NOTE

The child support, alimony, and property settlement data as well as data on income and poverty status presented in this report, from the 1986 Current Population Survey (CPS), are the first estimates based entirely on households selected from the 1980 census-based sample design. By contrast, the data from the 1984 CPS, presented in the previous report, were based entirely on households selected from the 1970 census-based sample design. The change in the sample design and its possible effects on the estimates should be kept in mind when comparing the data from this report to data from previous years.[1]

INTRODUCTION

This report presents information on the receipt by women of support payments following divorce and separation and of support payments for children of never-married women. The report includes information on both the award and actual receipt of child support by women on behalf of their children and on alimony for their own support. The report also provides additional data concerning receipt and type of property settlement for ever-divorced women.

The Bureau of the Census, under joint sponsorship with the Department of Health and Human Services, first conducted a survey specifically designed to obtain data on child support and alimony in the spring of 1979. The survey, with minor modifications, was subsequently conducted in the springs of 1982, 1984, and 1986 by the Bureau of the Census and sponsored, in part, by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Department of Health and Human Services. Data from the earlier surveys were presented in Current Population Reports, Series P-23, Nos. 112, 140, and 148, respectively.[2] Advance findings from the 1986 survey are presented in this report.

AWARD AND RECEIPT OF CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS

- As of spring 1986, 8.8 million women were living with children under 21 years of age whose fathers were not living in the households; 61 percent or about 5.4 million of these women had been awarded child support payments as of the survey date. (See table A.)
- Of the 5.4 million women awarded child support, 4.4 million women were supposed to receive child support for their children in 1985. (The remaining 1 million mothers did not have payments due them in 1985.) Of those due payment, about half received the full amount due. The remaining

[1]See the section, "Revised Survey Procedures." For a detailed description of the changes to the survey between 1986 and 1984, see the section, "Changes in the April CPS Survey."

[2]For a comparison of the 1982 and 1979 surveys, and the 1984 and 1982 surveys, see Current Population Reports, Series P-23, Nos. 140 and 148, respectively, the sections entitled "Changes in the Survey."

Table A. Award and Recipiency Status of Women—Child Support Payments in 1985 and 1983

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986 and 1984)

Award and recipiency status	1985		1983	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	8,808	100.0	8,690	100.0
Awarded[1]	5,396	61.3	5,015	57.7
Supposed to receive payments	4,381	49.7	3,995	46.0
Not supposed to receive payments	1,015	11.5	1,020	11.7
Not awarded[1]	3,411	38.7	3,675	42.3
Supposed to receive payments	4,381	100.0	3,995	100.0
Actually received payments	3,243	74.0	3,037	76.0
Received full amount	2,112	48.2	2,018	50.5
Received partial amount	1,131	25.8	1,019	25.5
Did not receive payments	1,138	26.0	958	24.0

[1]Award status as of spring 1986 or 1984.

women were equally split between those receiving partial payment and those receiving no payment at all (26 percent each).

- The child support award rate reported in 1986 (61 percent) increased from that of 1984 (58 percent). However, the proportion of women receiving payments in 1985 (74 percent) showed no significant change from that of the previous survey (76 percent).

- Of those mothers awarded child support for their children, 45 percent had health insurance included in the award. About half of White mothers had health insurance included in the awards for their children, compared with only about one-fourth of Black and Hispanic mothers. (See table B.)

- Of the 8.8 million mothers with children present from absent fathers, 3.4 million, or 39 percent, were never awarded child support for their children as of spring 1986. About one-half of the women without awards reported that they wanted awards but were unable to obtain them. About 37 percent of the women reported that they did not want child support awards for their children. For the remaining mothers (about 15 percent), awards were either pending or another arrangement (joint custody or a property settlement) was made.[3] (See table C.)

[3]Due to a change in questionnaire design in the 1986 survey, the reader should use care in comparing the data on reason for non-award from this survey with non-award data from the 1984 survey. For more details, see the section, "Changes in the April CPS Survey."

Table B. Child Support Award Status and Inclusion of Health Insurance in Award, by Selected Characteristics of Women

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986)

Characteristic	Awarded child support payments			
		Health insurance included in child support award		
	Total	Total	Number	Percent of total awarded
Total	8,808	5,396	2,402	44.5
Current Marital Status[1]				
Married[2]	2,322	1,904	818	43.0
Divorced	3,045	2,492	1,255	50.4
Separated	1,363	587	224	38.2
Never married	2,009	370	90	24.3
Race and Hispanic Origin				
White	6,341	4,476	2,167	48.4
Black	2,310	839	214	25.5
Hispanic[3]	813	342	86	25.1
Age				
18 to 29 years	2,887	1,288	501	38.9
30 to 39 years	3,614	2,547	1,142	44.8
40 years and over	2,307	1,561	758	48.6
Years of School Completed				
Less than 12 years	2,230	1,009	343	34.0
High school: 4 years	4,176	2,645	1,207	45.6
College: 1 to 3 years	1,653	1,169	539	46.1
4 years or more	748	573	312	54.5
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father				
One child	4,607	2,783	1,161	41.7
Two children	2,879	1,953	935	47.9
Three children	867	502	224	44.6
Four children or more	456	159	81	50.9

[1]Excludes a small number of currently widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[2]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Hispanic women may be of any race.

- The mean amount of child support for all women who received some payment in 1985 was $2,220.[4] After adjusting for inflation during the 1983 to 1985 period, child support payments showed a decrease in real terms. (See table D.) During the same period, the average income of men increased, from $19,630 in 1983 to $20,650 in 1985.[5]
- The proportion of women that had been awarded child support payments as of 1986 was higher for Whites (71 percent) than for Blacks (36 percent) or those of Hispanic origin (42 percent). (The percent difference between Black women and Hispanic women was not significant.) (See table E.)
- Women with 4 or more years of college were more likely to have been awarded support payments (77 percent) than women with 4 years of high school (63 percent). There was also some evidence that women with 4 or more years of college (82 percent) were more likely to receive

[4]Mean income figures in the text are rounded to the nearest $10.

[5] Income figures for males can be found in table 12 of Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 154. Information on income of absent fathers was not available from the survey. If mean income of all males is used as a proxy for mean income of absent fathers, for a meaningful comparison to be made, it must be assumed that the average income of all males was also representative of the average income of absent fathers.

Table C. Child Support Award Status and Reason for Non-Award, by Selected Characteristics of Women

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986)

Characteristic		Not awarded child support payments				
			Reason for non-award (percent)			
	Total	Total	Final agreement pending	Property settlement or joint custody in lieu	Did not want award	Wanted but could not obtain award[1]
Total	8,808	3,411	9.6	5.0	36.9	48.5
Current Marital Status[2]						
Married[3]	2,322	418	3.8	14.1	44.5	37.6
Divorced	3,045	553	3.6	12.5	39.2	44.7
Separated	1,363	776	25.1	3.4	19.7	51.8
Never married	2,009	1,639	6.0	0.9	42.2	51.0
Race and Hispanic Origin						
White	6,341	1,865	12.5	8.5	38.1	40.9
Black	2,310	1,471	6.0	0.9	34.4	58.8
Hispanic[4]	813	471	10.4	2.8	31.4	55.2
Age						
18 to 29 years	2,887	1,599	14.6	2.1	35.3	47.9
30 to 39 years	3,614	1,066	6.6	6.6	41.0	46.0
40 years and over	2,307	746	3.5	9.0	34.3	53.2
Years of School Completed						
Less than 12 years	2,230	1,221	9.1	3.5	30.8	56.6
High school: 4 years	4,176	1,531	10.1	5.4	40.7	43.9
College: 1 to 3 years	1,653	484	10.3	5.8	35.5	48.6
4 years or more	748	175	8.6	10.9	49.1	31.4
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father						
One child	4,607	1,824	10.6	5.4	40.2	43.8
Two children	2,879	926	9.4	5.7	34.1	50.9
Three children	867	364	5.5	4.9	30.2	59.3
Four children or more	456	297	9.1	1.0	33.0	56.6

[1]Agreement not sought or reached because of inability to locate father, establish paternity, or some other reason.
[2]Excludes a small number of currently widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[4]Hispanic women may be of any race.

payments than women with a high school education (74 percent).

- The award rate for never-married women (18 percent) was well below that of other women (74 percent). Also, never-married women who were awarded child support for their children were less likely to have health insurance included in their awards (24 percent) than were others (46 percent). (See table B.)
- Of women with children from an absent father as of spring 1986, about 32 percent (2.8 million) had incomes below the poverty level in 1985. (See table E.)
- About 40 percent of these women below the poverty level with children from an absent father had been awarded child support, compared with 61 percent for all women.
- Only about 905,000 women below the poverty level were due payments in 1985, and only 66 percent of these women received some amount of payment.
- The mean child support payment received in 1985 by women below the poverty level was $1,380, about two-thirds of the average payment received by all women.

Table D. Comparison of Mean Child Support Payments Received by Women in 1985 and 1983, by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	Mean child support payments			
		1983		Percent change in child support payments (constant dollars)
	1985	Constant dollars	Current dollars	
Total	$ 2,215	$ 2,528	$2,341	**-12.4
Current Marital Status[1]				
Married[2]	1,966	2,337	2,164	**-15.9
Divorced	2,538	2,690	2,491	-5.7
Separated	2,082	2,896	2,682	**-28.1
Never married	1,147	1,222	1,132	-6.1
Race and Hispanic Origin				
White	2,294	2,672	2,475	**-14.1
Black	1,754	1,582	1,465	10.9
Hispanic[3]	2,011	1,986	1,839	1.3
Age				
18 to 29 years	1,467	1,860	1,723	*-21.1
30 to 39 years	2,397	2,544	2,356	-5.8
40 years and over	2,552	3,205	2,968	**-20.4
Years of School Completed				
Less than 12 years	1,835	1,657	1,535	10.7
High school: 4 years	2,040	2,331	2,159	**-12.5
College: 1 to 3 years	2,447	2,518	2,332	-2.8
4 years or more	2,978	4,446	4,118	**-33.0
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father				
One child	1,679	1,921	1,779	**-12.6
Two children	2,597	3,004	2,782	*-13.5
Three children	2,800	3,178	2,943	-11.9
Four children or more	3,739	4,001	3,705	-6.5

*Significant between the 90- and 95-percent confidence levels.
**Significant at the 95-percent confidence level.

[1]Excludes a small number of currently widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[2]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Hispanic women may be of any race.

Table E. Child Support Payments Awarded and Received—Women With Children Present, by Selected Characteristics for All Women and Women With Incomes Below the Poverty Level in 1985

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986)

Characteristic	Supposed to receive child support in 1985		Actually received child support in 1985			
	Total	Percent awarded child support payments[1]	Total	Percent	Mean child support	Mean total money income
ALL WOMEN						
Total	8,808	61.3	4,381	74.0	$2,215	$14,776
Current Marital Status						
Married[2]	2,322	82.0	1,416	68.5	1,966	13,512
Divorced	3,045	81.8	2,179	75.1	2,538	16,778
Separated	1,363	43.1	453	84.3	2,082	12,642
Widowed[3]	69	(B)	30	(B)	(B)	(B)
Never married	2,009	18.4	303	76.2	1,147	9,675
Race and Hispanic Origin						
White	6,341	70.6	3,651	74.6	2,294	15,052
Black	2,310	36.3	657	72.0	1,754	13,297
Hispanic[4]	813	42.1	282	68.1	2,011	11,505
Age						
18 to 29 years	2,887	44.6	1,089	71.3	1,467	10,886
30 to 39 years	3,614	70.5	2,182	73.6	2,397	15,513
40 years and over	2,307	67.7	1,110	77.6	2,552	16,913
Years of School Completed						
Less than 12 years	2,230	45.2	750	67.1	1,835	9,144
High school: 4 years	4,176	63.3	2,152	74.3	2,040	13,577
College: 1 to 3 years	1,653	70.7	1,003	74.6	2,447	17,014
4 years or more	748	76.6	476	82.1	2,978	22,639
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father						
One child	4,607	60.4	2,146	72.0	1,679	14,151
Two children	2,879	67.8	1,659	77.7	2,597	15,259
Three children	867	57.9	426	71.8	2,800	16,319
Four children or more	456	34.9	150	68.7	3,739	13,544
WOMEN WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL IN 1985						
Total	2,797	40.4	905	65.7	$1,383	$5,130
Current Marital Status						
Married[2]	180	67.2	81	61.7	(B)	(B)
Divorced	795	71.9	499	60.3	1,522	5,295
Separated	646	34.2	158	73.4	1,503	4,994
Widowed[3]	18	(B)	4	(B)	(B)	(B)
Never married	1,159	17.9	163	75.5	900	5,450
Race and Hispanic Origin						
White	1,569	50.2	631	65.1	1,463	5,005
Black	1,190	27.1	257	67.7	1,085	5,403
Hispanic[4]	414	24.2	74	(B)	(B)	(B)
Age						
18 to 29 years	1,419	33.1	368	65.5	963	4,853
30 to 39 years	920	52.7	405	63.7	1,674	5,634
40 years and over	458	38.4	131	73.3	1,649	4,473
Years of School Completed						
Less than 12 years	1,244	32.5	306	63.4	1,350	5,103
High school: 4 years	1,188	44.5	437	68.4	1,319	5,072
College: 1 to 3 years	333	53.2	149	63.1	1,661	5,393
4 years or more	32	(B)	13	(B)	(B)	(B)
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father						
One child	1,185	40.3	359	65.7	1,112	4,531
Two children	940	47.1	362	68.2	1,580	5,004
Three children	400	37.3	125	56.0	(B)	(B)
Four children or more	272	22.1	59	(B)	(B)	(B)

B Base less than 75,000.
[1]Award status as of spring 1986.
[2]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[4]Hispanic women may be of any race.

THE DEFICIT IN CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS

- For the 4.4 million women due child support payments in 1985, the mean amount of child support (including the 1.1 million who did not receive any amount) was $1,640. If the full amount of payment due had been made to all women, the mean amount would have been $2,500. (See table F.)

Table F. Mean Child Support Payments to Women Due Child Support in 1985, by Type of Arrangement

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986)

Type of arrangement	Number	Percent distribution	Mean child support income received[1]	Mean child support income due
All payments[2]	4,381	100.0	$ 1,640	$ 2,495
Court ordered	2,751	62.8	1,345	2,393
Voluntary	1,441	32.9	2,187	2,706

[1]Mean amount based on all women due payments, whether or not payments were received.
[2]Includes a small number of women whose arrangement type was "other," not shown separately.

- Of the women due child support in 1985, 63 percent had court-ordered payments, while 33 percent had a voluntary agreement. (The remaining 4 percent had some other type of arrangement.)
- For women with court-ordered payments, the mean payment due was $2,390, but the mean amount received was only $1,350; therefore, women with court orders received only 56 percent of the amount they were due. In contrast, women with voluntary written agreements received 81 percent of the amount they were due, and their mean child support payments due ($2,710) and received ($2,190) were higher.
- The aggregate amount of child support payments due in 1985 was $10.9 billion, but actual payments received amounted to only about $7.2 billion. Thus, 66 percent of the total amount due was paid in 1985.[6]

AWARD AND RECEIPT OF ALIMONY PAYMENTS

- Of the 19.2 million ever-divorced or currently separated women as of spring 1986, 15 percent were awarded alimony payments. (See table G.)
- Of the 840,000 women due alimony payments in 1985, 73 percent received at least some portion of their award.
- Neither the alimony award rate in 1986 (15 percent) nor the recipiency rate in 1985 (73 percent) showed a significant change from that reported in 1984.

[6]Aggregate child support payments due and received are derived from table 3. The aggregate payments due refer only to the total due for the income year 1985 based on the information reported by the women in the survey; arrearages are *not* included in the aggregate figure.

Table G. Award and Recipiency Status of Women—Alimony Payments in 1985 and 1983

(Numbers in thousands. Ever-divorced and currently separated women as of spring 1986 and 1984)

Award and recipiency status	1985		1983	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	19,156	100.0	17,392	100.0
Awarded[1]	2,803	14.6	2,416	13.9
Supposed to receive payments	840	4.4	791	4.5
Not supposed to receive payments	1,963	10.2	1,625	9.3
Not awarded[1]	16,354	85.4	14,976	86.1
Supposed to receive payments	840	100.0	791	100.0
Received payments	616	73.3	608	76.9
Did not receive payments	225	26.8	183	23.1

[1]Award status as of spring 1986 or 1984.

- The mean amount of alimony received by women in 1985 was $3,730, not significantly different from the 1983 figure, either before or after adjusting for inflation. (See table H.)
- The alimony award rate for White women (16 percent) was twice that of Black women (8 percent). (There was no statistically significant difference in award rates between Hispanic women and either White or Black women.) (See table I.)

Table H. Comparison of Mean Alimony Payments Received by Women in 1985 and 1983, by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	Mean alimony payments			
		1983		
	1985	Constant dollars	Current dollars	Percent change in alimony payments (constant dollars)
Total	$3,733	$4,293	$3,976	-13.0
Current Marital Status[1]				
Divorced	3,975	4,805	4,450	-17.3
Separated	3,083	3,491	3,233	-11.7
Race and Hispanic Origin				
White	3,858	4,634	4,292	*-16.7
Black	(B)	(B)	(B)	(X)
Hispanic[2]	(B)	(B)	(B)	(X)
Age				
18 to 29 years	(B)	(B)	(B)	(X)
30 to 39 years	3,200	2,653	2,457	20.6
40 years and over	4,365	5,757	5,332	**-24.2
Years of School Completed				
Less than 12 years	3,574	(B)	(B)	(X)
High school: 4 years	2,588	3,255	3,015	-20.5
College: 1 to 3 years	5,907	5,364	4,968	10.1
4 years or more	4,300	5,502	5,096	-21.8
Presence of Own Children From an Absent Father				
No children	4,241	5,682	5,262	**-25.4
One or more children	3,174	3,147	2,915	0.9

B Base less than 75,000.
X Not applicable.
*Significant between the 90- and 95-percent confidence levels.
**Significant at the 95-percent confidence level.

[1]Excludes currently married and currently widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[2]Hispanic women may be of any race.

Table I. Alimony Payments Awarded and Received in 1985—Ever-Divorced and Currently Separated Women, by Selected Characteristics

(Numbers in thousands. Women as of spring 1986)

Characteristic	Supposed to receive alimony in 1985					
			Actually received alimony in 1985			
	Total	Percent awarded alimony payments	Total	Percent	Mean alimony payments	Mean total money income
Total	19,156	14.6	840	73.3	$3,733	$17,781
Marital Status[1]						
Married[2]	7,361	13.8	89	58.4	(B)	(B)
Divorced	8,000	17.1	604	73.3	3,975	19,425
Separated	2,610	10.0	146	82.2	3,083	12,891
Race and Hispanic Origin						
White	16,039	15.8	752	74.3	3,858	18,012
Black	2,766	8.0	70	(B)	(B)	(B)
Hispanic[3]	1,196	11.0	42	(B)	(B)	(B)
Age						
18 to 29 years	2,817	7.7	107	57.9	(B)	(B)
30 to 39 years	5,678	10.9	270	72.2	3,200	16,912
40 years and over	10,662	18.5	464	77.2	4,365	19,821
Years of School Completed						
Less than 12 years	5,069	11.8	144	67.4	3,574	11,051
High school: 4 years	8,378	15.3	383	71.8	2,588	14,420
College: 1 to 3 years	3,558	15.2	161	73.9	5,907	22,006
4 years or more	2,150	17.7	152	82.2	4,300	26,376
Presence of Own Children From an Absent Father						
No children present	12,357	16.4	452	71.2	4,241	18,086
One or more children present	6,799	11.4	388	75.5	3,174	17,445

B Base less than 75,000.
[1]Excludes a small number of currently widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[2]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Hispanic women may be of any race.

AWARD OF PROPERTY SETTLEMENTS

- Of the 16.5 million ever-divorced women as of spring 1986, 5.9 million, or about 36 percent, were awarded a property settlement, showing no change from the percentage reported in the 1984 survey. (See table J.)
- About 26 percent of women with a property settlement as of spring 1986 received a "one-time" cash payment as at least part of the settlement. (See table K.) About 22 percent received only a cash payment, while about 4 percent received both a cash payment and other property.
- Of women awarded a property settlement, about 25 percent also received some form of support payment in 1985. Of ever-divorced women without a property settlement, about 14 percent received support payments in 1985. (See table 5.)
- The average total income of women with property settlements ($14,970) was higher than those without settlements ($11,850).

Table J. Receipt of Property Settlement by Ever-Divorced Women, as Reported in 1986 and 1984

(Numbers in thousands. Women as of spring 1986 and 1984)

Receipt of property settlement	1986	1984
Total	16,547	14,761
No property settlement reached	10,663	9,269
Received property settlement	5,883	5,492
Percent receiving property settlement	35.6	37.2

Table K. Receipt and Type of Property Settlement for Ever-Divorced Women, by Selected Characteristics

(Numbers in thousands. Women as of spring 1986)

Characteristic	Total	No settlement reached	Property settlement reached			
			Total	Type of settlement (percent)		
				Cash[1] only	Other types[2] only	Cash[1] and other types[2]
Total	16,547	10,663	5,883	21.6	74.2	4.2
Current Marital Status						
Divorced	8,000	4,869	3,131	23.5	73.1	3.4
Married[3]	7,361	4,893	2,468	20.5	74.6	4.9
Widowed[4]	1,186	901	285	10.5	82.1	7.4
Race and Hispanic Origin						
White	14,408	9,078	5,330	22.1	75.2	2.7
Black	1,832	1,373	459	14.6	66.0	19.4
Hispanic[5]	866	619	247	19.0	76.1	4.5
Age						
18 to 29 years	2,046	1,535	511	24.7	73.4	2.0
30 to 39 years	4,950	3,106	1,844	23.2	74.8	2.1
40 years and over	9,550	6,022	3,528	20.4	74.0	5.7
Years of School Completed						
Less than 12 years	4,146	2,975	1,171	18.6	76.1	5.3
High school: 4 years	7,354	4,735	2,619	20.8	74.7	4.5
College: 1 to 3 years	3,091	1,910	1,182	22.1	73.9	3.9
4 years or more	1,955	1,044	911	27.3	70.4	2.3
Presence of Own Children From an Absent Father						
No children	11,110	7,197	3,913	21.3	73.8	5.0
One or more children	5,436	3,466	1,970	22.3	75.0	2.7

[1]A one-time cash settlement.
[2]Other property (e.g., house, other real estate, cars, or furnishing).
[3]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[4]Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[5]Hispanic women may be of any race.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY

The data on child support and alimony were collected in a special supplement to the April 1986 Current Population Survey (CPS). All women 18 years of age and older were within the universe for the supplemental questions. The presence of own children under 21 years of age whose father did not live in the same household determined whether or not a woman was eligible for the questions on child support. Marital status and divorce history determined whether or not a woman was eligible for the questions on alimony and property settlements. The supplemental questions were placed on the April CPS so that this information could be combined with information previously collected in the March CPS on annual work experience, income, and poverty status.

REVISED SURVEY PROCEDURES

The note at the beginning of this report indicates a revision to survey procedures for the CPS. This revision was the change from the 1970 sample design to a sample design based on the 1980 census.

During the period from April 1984 through June 1985, the Bureau of the Census systematically introduced a new sample design for the Current Population Survey. The purposes of this new sample design were to update the sampling frame to the 1980-census base, to improve survey efficiency, and to improve the quality of the survey estimates. The new sample design may have small effects on estimates of income, including income from child support and alimony payments.

CHANGES IN THE APRIL CPS SURVEY

In an attempt to improve reporting and the useability of the data, a minor modification was made to one question from the previous survey. (See Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 148, appendix C.)

The change was made to the item which ascertains the reason for non-award for those women with children present from absent fathers who were not awarded child support for their children. In the previous survey, women interviewed were asked to indicate the reason for non-award, either by specifying one of the six response categories or by indicating there was "some other reason." In the 1984 survey, if the respondent indicated that there was "some other reason," she was not asked to specify what that reason was. A substantial portion of those responding to this item simply indicated that there was "some other reason" for non-award.

For the 1986 CPS, the same individual response categories from the 1984 CPS were retained; however, the requirement was added that when a respondent answered "some other reason," the interviewer was to ask the respondent to specify what that reason was.

Likely as a result of the change, a lower proportion of women interviewed in 1986 responded that the reason for non-award was "other" than did those interviewed in 1984. The proportion of women identifying one of the six specified categories as the reason for non-award was thereby increased from that of the previous survey. Thus, when comparing the data from 1986 on reason for non-award to the data collected in 1984, the reader should keep in mind the effect on the data of the change in the wording of that item.

CHANGES IN THE MARCH CPS SURVEY

The Census Bureau made a revision to the March CPS income supplement questionnaire in an effort to adapt to continually rising levels of annual income. Beginning with the March 1986 CPS, the question which covers the amount of earnings received from the employer or own business for which the respondent worked the longest during the previous calendar year was modified to permit coding of earnings amounts to a maximum of $299,999. Prior to March 1986, procedures allowed for coding of amounts to a maximum of $99,999. This change in the questionnaire causes a break in the time series for some income measures. For detailed information on this change, see Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 154, "Revisions to the Earnings Question on the March 1986 CPS."

Table 1. Child Support Payments Agreed to or Awarded, by Characteristics of All Women and Women With Incomes Below the Poverty Level in 1985

(Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristic	Total (Thous.)	Child support payments-- Agreed to or awarded: Total[1] (Thous.)	Supposed to receive payments in 1985: Total (Thous.)	Received payments: Number (Thous.)	Received payments: Mean total money income: Value (Dol.)	Received payments: Mean total money income: Standard error (Dol.)	Received payments: Mean income from child support: Value (Dol.)	Received payments: Mean income from child support: Standard error (Dol.)	Did not receive payments: Number (Thous.)	Did not receive payments: Mean total money income: Value (Dol.)	Did not receive payments: Mean total money income: Standard error (Dol.)	Not awarded: Number (Thous.)	Not awarded: Mean total money income: Value (Dol.)	Not awarded: Mean total money income: Standard error (Dol.)
ALL WOMEN														
Total	9 808	5 396	4 381	3 243	14 778	310	2 215	61	1 138	10 837	495	3 411	7 998	266
Standard error	218	174	158	137	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	82	(X)	(X)	140	(X)	(X)
Current Marital Status														
Married[2]	2 322	1 904	1 416	970	13 512	601	1 966	83	447	9 621	835	418	8 495	858
Divorced	3 045	2 492	2 179	1 637	16 778	418	2 538	98	541	12 580	712	553	11 375	757
Separated	1 363	587	453	362	12 642	706	2 062	166	71	(B)	(B)	776	9 065	730
Widowed[3]	69	43	30	23	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	7	(B)	(B)	26	(B)	(B)
Never married	2 009	370	303	231	9 675	1 256	1 147	148	72	(B)	(B)	1 639	6 247	246
Race and Hispanic Origin														
White	6 341	4 476	3 651	2 722	15 052	338	2 294	67	929	10 854	543	1 865	8 746	416
Black	2 310	839	657	473	13 297	698	1 754	151	184	10 477	1 350	1 471	6 969	322
Hispanic[4]	813	342	282	192	11 506	1 226	2 011	327	90	9 430	1 819	471	6 306	662
Age														
18 to 29 years	2 887	1 298	1 089	777	10 886	559	1 467	86	312	6 406	715	1 589	5 323	222
30 to 39 years	3 614	2 547	2 182	1 608	15 513	430	2 397	89	578	11 553	659	1 066	10 066	476
40 years and over	2 307	1 551	1 110	861	16 913	640	2 552	130	249	14 730	1 239	746	10 770	624
Years of School Completed														
Less than 12 years	2 230	1 009	750	503	9 144	702	1 635	139	247	5 670	605	1 221	4 862	234
High school: 4 years	4 176	2 645	2 152	1 600	15 577	368	2 040	77	552	9 736	618	1 531	7 942	338
College: 1 to 3 years	1 653	1 189	1 003	748	17 014	677	2 447	137	255	14 245	1 067	464	10 823	715
4 years or more	748	573	476	391	22 639	1 013	2 978	217	85	22 880	2 454	175	22 567	2 586
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father														
One child	4 607	2 783	2 148	1 545	14 151	456	1 679	61	601	11 367	678	1 824	8 486	353
Two children	2 679	1 953	1 656	1 269	15 259	497	2 597	104	370	11 327	958	926	7 556	407
Three children	867	502	426	306	16 319	982	2 800	239	120	6 515	866	364	8 287	1 325
Four children or more	456	159	150	103	13 544	1 064	3 739	615	47	(B)	(B)	297	6 151	563
WOMEN WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL IN 1985														
Total	2 797	1 130	905	595	5 130	350	1 383	180	310	4 587	630	1 668	3 926	211
Standard error	187	120	107	87	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	63	(X)	(X)	145	(X)	(X)
Current Marital Status														
Married[2]	190	121	91	50	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	31	(B)	(B)	59	(B)	(B)
Divorced	795	572	499	301	5 295	490	1 522	268	198	5 023	686	223	4 146	610
Separated	648	221	158	116	4 904	635	1 503	414	41	(B)	(B)	425	4 335	446
Widowed[3]	18	9	4	4	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	-	(B)	(B)	9	(B)	(B)
Never married	1 159	207	163	123	5 450	709	900	295	40	(B)	(B)	952	3 770	254
Race and Hispanic Origin														
White	1 589	787	631	411	5 005	428	1 483	231	221	4 583	725	782	3 969	343
Black	1 190	322	257	174	5 403	611	1 085	237	83	4 534	1 152	868	3 900	280
Hispanic[4]	414	100	74	43	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	31	(B)	(B)	314	4 266	683
Age														
18 to 29 years	1 419	469	368	241	4 853	537	983	232	128	3 943	853	951	3 596	252
30 to 39 years	920	485	405	258	5 634	531	1 674	296	147	4 973	955	435	4 499	433
40 years and over	458	176	131	96	4 473	817	1 649	413	35	(B)	(B)	282	4 160	591
Years of School Completed														
Less than 12 years	1 244	404	306	194	5 103	572	1 350	315	113	3 979	1 069	840	3 610	293
High school: 4 years	1 188	529	437	299	5 072	523	1 319	247	139	4 780	866	660	4 199	320
College: 1 to 3 years	333	177	149	94	5 383	833	1 661	480	55	(B)	(B)	156	4 455	809
4 years or more	32	20	13	8	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	5	(B)	(B)	12	(B)	(B)
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father														
One child	1 185	478	359	236	4 531	513	1 112	234	122	3 606	1 041	707	3 336	281
Two children	940	443	382	247	5 004	536	1 580	269	115	5 083	943	497	4 131	369
Three children	400	149	125	70	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	55	(B)	(B)	252	4 329	550
Four children or more	272	60	59	41	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	18	(B)	(B)	212	4 937	706

[1]Includes a small number of women who were not supposed to receive payments in 1985.
[2]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[4]Hispanic women may be of any race.

Table 2. Child Support Award Status—Inclusion of Health Insurance in Award and Reason for Non-Award, by Characteristics of All Women and Women With Incomes Below the Poverty Level in 1985

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristic	Total	Awarded			Not awarded							
						Reason for non-award						
										Wanted award but–		
		Total	Health insurance included	Health insurance not included	Total	Final agreement pending	Property settlement in lieu	Joint custody granted	Did not want child support	Unable to locate father	Unable to establish paternity	Some other reason
ALL WOMEN												
Total	8 808	5 396	2 402	2 995	3 411	329	68	103	1 257	1 075	109	470
Standard error	218	174	118	132	140	44	(B)	25	86	80	26	53
Current Marital Status												
Married[1]	2 322	1 904	818	1 086	418	16	20	39	186	86	6	65
Separated	1 363	587	224	363	776	195	11	15	153	290	-	112
Divorced	3 045	2 492	1 255	1 237	553	20	33	36	217	153	18	76
Widowed[2]	69	43	15	29	26	-	4	-	10	8	-	4
Never married	2 009	370	90	280	1 639	98	-	14	692	538	85	213
Race and Hispanic Origin												
White	6 341	4 476	2 167	2 309	1 865	234	64	94	710	456	31	275
Black	2 310	839	214	625	1 471	88	4	9	506	598	75	192
Hispanic[3]	813	342	86	256	471	49	10	3	148	183	5	72
Age												
18 to 29 years	2 887	1 288	501	787	1 599	233	-	34	565	454	54	258
30 to 39 years	3 614	2 547	1 142	1 405	1 066	70	15	55	437	331	39	120
40 years and over	2 307	1 561	758	803	746	26	53	14	256	289	16	92
Years of School Completed												
Less than 12 years	2 230	1 009	343	666	1 221	111	19	24	376	469	53	169
High school: 4 years	4 176	2 645	1 207	1 438	1 531	154	32	50	623	426	39	205
College: 1 to 3 years	1 653	1 169	539	630	484	50	7	21	172	134	17	84
4 years or more	748	573	312	261	175	15	10	9	86	43	-	12
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father												
One child	4 607	2 783	1 161	1 621	1 824	194	42	56	734	493	53	253
Two children	2 879	1 953	935	1 018	926	87	21	32	316	297	34	140
Three children	867	502	224	278	364	20	5	13	110	169	14	33
Four children or more	456	159	81	78	297	27	-	3	98	116	8	44
WOMEN WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL IN 1985												
Total	2 797	1 130	418	712	1 666	174	13	31	490	661	64	235
Standard error	187	120	73	95	145	47	(B)	(B)	79	92	(B)	58
Current Marital Status												
Married[1]	180	121	49	71	59	3	-	9	13	24	1	9
Separated	646	221	63	158	425	113	3	3	80	168	-	58
Divorced	795	572	252	320	223	7	9	12	67	85	8	34
Widowed[2]	18	9	-	9	9	-	-	-	2	3	-	3
Never married	1 156	207	53	154	952	50	-	7	328	381	55	131
Race and Hispanic Origin												
White	1 569	787	348	439	782	115	12	22	245	245	23	120
Black	1 190	322	65	257	868	53	1	9	242	409	41	114
Hispanic[3]	414	100	20	80	314	31	5	-	90	142	5	41
Age												
18 to 29 years	1 419	468	170	299	951	128	-	16	291	320	37	157
30 to 39 years	920	485	199	286	435	31	1	12	128	192	23	47
40 years and over	458	176	49	127	282	15	12	-	71	149	4	31
Years of School Completed												
Less than 12 years	1 244	404	124	281	840	85	6	12	243	358	37	99
High school: 4 years	1 186	526	213	315	660	74	7	13	204	236	18	107
College: 1 to 3 years	333	177	64	113	156	13	-	6	34	65	9	30
4 years or more	32	20	17	3	12	1	-	-	8	2	-	-
Number of Own Children Present From an Absent Father												
One child	1 186	479	178	302	707	92	7	14	210	261	30	93
Two children	940	443	174	269	497	48	5	11	147	182	14	90
Three children	400	149	44	105	252	12	-	2	74	132	12	19
Four children or more	272	60	24	36	212	22	-	3	60	86	8	33

[1]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[2]Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Hispanic women may be of any race.

Table 3. Receipt of Child Support Payments in 1985—Women With Children Present, by Type of Arrangement

(Numbers in thousands. Women with own children under 21 years of age present from absent fathers as of spring 1986. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristic	Total due payments		Amount of payments due in 1985							
	Number	Standard error	$1 to $499	$500 to $999	$1,000 to $1,499	$1,500 to $1,999	$2,000 to $2,999	$3,000 to $4,999	$5,000 to $6,999	$7,000 and over
All Payments[1]										
Percent of Payments Received in 1985:										
Total	4 381	158	190	535	751	650	1 000	882	206	167
0.0	1 138	82	57	189	278	192	230	174	12	6
0.1 to 24.9	362	46	2	42	46	57	97	78	15	24
25.0 to 49.9	198	34	13	40	22	19	60	34	6	4
50.0 to 74.9	346	45	13	49	52	66	69	66	17	15
75.0 to 99.9	223	36	3	14	25	38	71	56	5	10
100.0 and over	2 112	111	101	201	328	279	473	473	151	107
Mean income from child support[2] dollars	1 640	(X)	267	380	640	962	1 476	2 440	4 674	7 349
Standard error dollars	51	(X)	58	27	35	51	57	93	227	530
Mean total money income dollars	13 753	(X)	7 053	9 910	12 990	12 715	13 425	16 438	18 460	23 089
Standard error dollars	267	(X)	799	648	658	652	491	610	1 285	1 706
Number below poverty level	905	(X)	87	164	182	116	199	124	22	11
Standard error	107	(X)	33	46	48	39	51	40	(B)	(B)
If Full Amount of Payments Were Received in 1985:										
Mean income from child support[2] dollars	2 495	(X)	292	756	1 219	1 726	2 407	3 702	5 851	9 572
Standard error dollars	50	(X)	15	11	7	9	12	31	56	317
Mean total money income dollars	14 616	(X)	7 166	10 291	13 571	13 481	14 358	17 704	19 457	25 312
Standard error dollars	267	(X)	796	645	654	648	484	596	1 270	1 660
Number below poverty level	801	(X)	87	161	165	105	177	93	15	-
Standard error	101	(X)	33	45	46	37	48	34	(B)	(B)
Court-Ordered Payments										
Percent of Payments Received in 1985:										
Total	2 751	126	128	365	460	466	610	523	104	96
0.0	921	74	39	145	224	165	191	148	4	6
0.1 to 24.9	254	39	2	26	32	44	66	49	14	20
25.0 to 49.9	151	30	13	30	14	16	40	26	6	4
50.0 to 74.9	225	37	13	40	34	51	44	28	11	5
75.0 to 99.9	147	30	3	12	15	23	39	47	3	5
100.0 and over	1 054	79	56	112	141	167	230	228	65	55
Mean income from child support[2] dollars	1 345	(X)	247	352	480	837	1 237	2 099	4 386	6 536
Standard error dollars	60	(X)	68	33	43	60	74	124	362	724
Mean total money income dollars	13 192	(X)	6 829	10 679	12 224	12 222	12 370	16 567	20 550	19 473
Standard error dollars	326	(X)	1 031	818	859	614	651	748	2 249	1 700
Number below poverty level	585	(X)	56	113	102	82	139	69	12	11
Standard error	86	(X)	(B)	38	36	32	42	(B)	(B)	(B)
If Full Amount of Payments Were Received in 1985:										
Mean income from child support[2] dollars	2 393	(X)	287	762	1 216	1 735	2 393	3 683	5 748	9 648
Standard error dollars	61	(X)	16	13	9	11	15	37	62	398
Mean total money income dollars	14 247	(X)	6 951	11 096	12 960	13 120	13 528	18 158	21 912	22 585
Standard error dollars	327	(X)	1 029	818	856	609	640	724	2 199	1 694
Number below poverty level	511	(X)	56	110	85	74	125	51	9	-
Standard error	81	(X)	(B)	38	33	(B)	40	(B)	(B)	(B)
Voluntary Written Agreements										
Percent of Payments Received in 1985:										
Total	1 441	92	56	128	246	173	352	325	101	60
0.0	184	33	11	28	51	27	31	26	8	-
0.1 to 24.9	94	24	-	16	11	13	32	18	-	4
25.0 to 49.9	38	(B)	-	10	6	-	14	8	-	-
50.0 to 74.9	106	25	-	7	16	15	23	34	6	5
75.0 to 99.9	75	21	-	2	10	15	31	9	2	5
100.0 and over	945	75	45	65	153	103	223	227	65	45
Mean income from child support[2] dollars	2 187	(X)	(B)	432	676	1 267	1 883	3 011	4 992	(B)
Standard error dollars	93	(X)	(B)	50	56	89	80	133	260	(B)
Mean total money income dollars	14 900	(X)	(B)	9 500	14 477	14 194	15 302	15 794	16 425	(B)
Standard error dollars	477	(X)	(B)	1 222	1 096	1 771	730	1 035	1 110	(B)
Number below poverty level	255	(X)	24	26	64	34	49	46	10	-
Standard error	57	(X)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
If Full Amount of Payments Were Received in 1985:										
Mean income from child support[2] dollars	2 706	(X)	(B)	751	1 228	1 707	2 433	3 752	5 554	(B)
Standard error dollars	88	(X)	(B)	21	13	19	19	56	72	(B)
Mean total money income dollars	15 428	(X)	(B)	9 818	14 832	14 640	15 853	16 536	16 987	(B)
Standard error dollars	477	(X)	(B)	1 203	1 092	1 769	733	1 020	1 110	(B)
Number below poverty level	226	(X)	24	26	64	30	41	34	5	-
Standard error	54	(X)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)

[1]Includes a small number of women whose arrangement type was 'other,' not shown separately.
[2]Mean amount based on all women due payments, whether or not payments were received.

Table 4. Alimony or Maintenance Payments Agreed to or Awarded, by Characteristics of All Women and Women With Incomes Below the Poverty Level in 1985

(Ever-divorced or currently separated women as of spring 1986. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristic	Alimony or maintenance payments--													
		Agreed to or awarded										Not awarded		
			Supposed to receive payments in 1985										Mean total money income	
				Received payments					Did not receive payments					
					Mean total money income		Mean income from alimony/maint.			Mean total money income				
	Total (Thous.)	Total[1] (Thous.)	Total (Thous.)	Number (Thous.)	Value (Dol.)	Standard error (Dol.)	Value (Dol.)	Standard error (Dol.)	Number (Thous.)	Value (Dol.)	Standard error (Dol.)	Number (Thous.)	Value (Dol.)	Standard error (Dol.)
ALL WOMEN														
Total	19 156	2 603	840	616	17 781	943	3 733	294	225	11 262	1 096	16 354	11 736	144
Standard error	300	127	71	60	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	37	(X)	(X)	283	(X)	(X)
Current Marital Status														
Married[2]	7 361	1 015	89	52	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	37	(B)	(B)	6 346	10 122	236
Widowed[3]	1 186	159	1	-	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	1	(B)	(B)	1 027	9 245	419
Divorced	8 000	1 368	604	443	19 425	1 133	3 975	360	161	11 811	1 326	6 632	14 346	224
Separated	2 610	261	148	120	12 891	1 859	3 083	624	26	(B)	(B)	2 348	9 814	349
Race and Hispanic Origin														
White	16 039	2 539	752	559	18 012	1 008	3 858	316	193	11 413	1 203	13 500	12 108	163
Black	2 766	220	70	44	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	25	(B)	(B)	2 548	9 816	316
Hispanic[4]	1 198	132	42	29	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	13	(B)	(B)	1 064	8 586	596
Age														
18 to 29 years	2 817	216	107	62	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	45	(B)	(B)	2 601	8 918	270
30 to 39 years	5 678	618	270	195	16 912	1 620	3 200	447	75	11 178	1 666	5 060	13 524	273
40 years and over	10 662	1 969	464	358	19 821	1 287	4 365	423	106	13 685	1 737	8 693	11 538	200
Years of School Completed														
Less than 12 years	5 069	600	144	97	11 051	1 411	3 574	637	47	(B)	(B)	4 470	8 334	158
High school: 4 years	8 378	1 280	383	275	14 420	1 164	2 588	318	108	11 279	1 464	7 098	11 356	192
College: 1 to 3 years	3 558	542	161	119	22 006	1 860	5 907	913	42	(B)	(B)	3 016	14 734	348
4 years or more	2 150	381	152	125	26 376	2 711	4 300	662	27	(B)	(B)	1 770	21 790	603
Presence of Own Children From an Absent Father														
No children present	12 357	2 026	452	322	18 086	1 379	4 241	450	129	12 085	1 507	10 331	11 471	183
One child or more present	6 799	777	388	293	17 445	1 271	3 174	361	95	10 142	1 559	6 023	12 190	232
Year of Divorce or Separation														
1980 and later	7 764	962	559	436	18 049	1 094	4 046	375	121	10 151	1 429	6 803	12 596	223
1975 to 1979	3 921	440	134	86	17 012	2 255	3 245	587	47	(B)	(B)	3 481	12 956	332
1970 to 1974	2 469	466	99	59	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	39	(B)	(B)	2 003	12 014	420
Before 1970	5 002	935	48	30	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	18	(B)	(B)	4 067	9 115	253
Work Experience in 1985														
Worked	13 047	1 903	619	463	20 933	1 122	3 834	346	156	14 531	1 338	11 144	15 017	175
Worked at full-time jobs	10 177	1 454	455	331	23 952	1 325	4 006	447	124	16 752	1 490	8 723	17 168	200
50 to 52 weeks	7 701	1 103	325	233	27 341	1 529	4 332	554	92	18 152	1 743	6 598	19 239	218
Worked at part-time jobs	2 869	448	164	132	13 354	1 662	3 404	454	32	(B)	(B)	2 421	7 265	217
Did not work	6 110	900	221	153	8 245	830	3 425	553	68	(B)	(B)	5 210	4 718	156
WOMEN WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL IN 1985														
Total	3 716	434	175	109	5 262	780	1 452	557	66	(B)	(B)	3 281	3 625	160
Standard error	214	74	47	37	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(B)	(X)	(X)	201	(X)	(X)
Current Marital Status														
Married[2]	524	55	3	2	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	1	(B)	(B)	470	1 900	475
Widowed[3]	309	39	1	-	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	1	(B)	(B)	270	3 917	324
Divorced	1 800	247	110	82	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	48	(B)	(B)	1 553	3 962	219
Separated	1 082	93	61	44	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	17	(B)	(B)	989	3 835	290
Race and Hispanic Origin														
White	2 670	378	152	97	5 301	859	1 485	610	55	(B)	(B)	2 292	3 516	195
Black	973	49	21	11	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	10	(B)	(B)	924	3 877	275
Hispanic[4]	410	35	9	9	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	1	(B)	(B)	376	4 076	645
Age														
18 to 29 years	851	86	55	33	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	22	(B)	(B)	765	3 476	310
30 to 39 years	1 090	111	66	45	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	20	(B)	(B)	979	4 229	330
40 years and over	1 774	237	54	30	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	24	(B)	(B)	1 537	3 314	215
Presence of Own Children From an Absent Father														
No children present	2 077	266	72	41	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	31	(B)	(B)	1 811	2 999	183
One child or more present	1 638	168	103	67	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	36	(B)	(B)	1 470	4 395	260

[1]Includes women who were not supposed to receive payments in 1985.
[2]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[3]Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[4]Hispanic women may be of any race.

Table 5. Property Settlements Following Divorce—Ever-Divorced Women, by Characteristics

(Numbers in thousands. Women as of spring 1986. For meaning of symbols, see text)

Characteristic	Total	No settlement reached				Property settlement reached						
			Received--				Received--			Type of settlement		
		Total[1]	Child support only	Alimony only	Child support and alimony	Total[1]	Child support only	Alimony only	Child support and alimony	Cash[2] only	Other types[3] only	Cash[2] and other types[3]
Total	16 547	10 663	1 352	60	55	5 883	1 107	264	116	1 272	4 363	248
Standard error	284	237	89	(B)	(B)	181	81	40	26	87	157	38
Current Marital Status												
Divorced	8 000	4 869	831	55	49	3 131	648	230	109	736	2 289	106
Married[4]	7 361	4 893	508	5	6	2 468	448	34	7	507	1 841	120
Widowed[5]	1 186	901	12	-	-	285	11	-	-	30	234	21
Race and Hispanic Origin												
White	14 406	9 078	1 179	42	51	5 330	1 014	249	115	1 179	4 007	144
Black	1 832	1 373	160	18	3	459	73	6	2	67	303	89
Hispanic[6]	866	619	64	3	5	247	61	-	2	47	188	11
Age												
18 to 29 years	2 046	1 535	329	2	10	511	163	8	13	126	375	10
30 to 39 years	4 950	3 106	674	12	31	1 844	624	75	38	427	1 379	38
40 years and over	9 550	6 022	349	46	14	3 528	320	181	65	719	2 609	200
Years of School Completed												
Less than 12 years	4 146	2 975	200	14	7	1 171	147	39	3	218	891	62
High school: 4 years	7 354	4 735	659	25	33	2 619	549	106	63	544	1 956	119
College: 1 to 3 years	3 091	1 910	351	11	8	1 182	248	57	22	261	874	46
4 years or more	1 955	1 044	142	10	7	911	163	62	27	249	641	21
Presence of Own Children From an Absent Father												
No children present	11 110	7 197	(X)	49	(X)	3 913	(X)	236	(X)	833	2 887	194
One child or more present	5 436	3 466	1 352	11	55	1 970	1 107	28	116	439	1 477	54
Year of Divorce												
1980 and later	5 900	3 642	816	20	39	2 258	653	183	93	558	1 605	95
1975 to 1979	3 640	2 289	366	15	13	1 351	277	30	13	334	961	55
1970 to 1974	2 287	1 470	135	14	3	817	117	33	10	197	570	51
Before 1970	4 720	3 262	35	12	-	1 457	60	18	-	184	1 227	46
Income in 1985												
Without income	898	663	(X)	(X)	(X)	235	(X)	(X)	(X)	41	171	23
With income	15 649	10 000	1 352	60	55	5 648	1 107	264	116	1 231	4 192	225
$1 to $999 or loss	1 092	775	38	-	-	317	26	7	-	65	230	22
$1,000 to $1,999	578	402	44	-	-	176	32	2	2	32	140	4
$2,000 to $3,999	1 615	1 158	104	7	8	457	88	15	3	84	360	13
$4,000 to $5,999	1 551	1 096	69	12	-	455	76	15	-	75	354	26
$6,000 to $7,999	1 541	1 055	101	4	4	487	94	28	11	89	383	15
$8,000 to $9,999	1 093	733	101	3	5	361	53	21	9	66	290	5
$10,000 to $11,999	1 062	680	107	3	3	382	61	18	10	76	282	24
$12,000 to $14,999	1 619	993	180	2	-	625	122	22	16	168	424	33
$15,000 to $19,999	2 055	1 276	248	4	11	779	217	30	24	174	551	14
$20,000 to $24,999	1 395	782	172	12	16	612	155	20	13	182	406	24
$25,000 and over	2 048	1 051	188	13	8	997	183	84	28	220	733	46
Median income dollars	10 667	9 405	13 871	(B)	(B)	12 911	15 011	15 352	16 420	14 295	12 409	12 325
Standard error dollars	196	227	511	(B)	(B)	300	659	2 053	1 863	521	361	1 105
Mean income dollars	12 973	11 848	14 993	(B)	(B)	14 965	15 739	19 811	18 688	16 127	14 842	14 623
Standard error dollars	150	176	460	(B)	(B)	270	556	1 650	1 642	591	311	1 344

[1]Detail does not add to total because some ever-divorced women received neither child support nor alimony, not shown separately.
[2]A one-time cash settlement.
[3]Other property (e.g., house, other real estate, cars, or furnishings).
[4]Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[5]Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.
[6]Hispanic women may be of any race.

Appendix A. Definitions and Explanations

Child support. Data on award of child support payments were collected from women 18 years or older with children under 21 years of age whose father was not living in the household as of spring 1986. Information on recipiency and amount of payments was obtained from women who reported that they were awarded or had agreements to receive child support payments in 1985. For ever-married women, payment amounts were limited to only those from the last divorce or separation.

Alimony. Data on the award of alimony or maintenance payments were collected from women 18 years or older who were ever-divorced or currently separated as of spring 1986. Information on recipiency status and payment amounts was obtained from those women who reported that they were awarded or had agreements to receive alimony payments in 1985. The data are limited to payments received from the most recent divorce or separation.

Property settlements. Data on property settlements were collected from women 18 years or older who were ever-divorced as of spring 1986. For the purposes of this survey, a property settlement consists of a one-time cash settlement or other property (i.e., house, other real estate, car, or furniture) or a combination of both.

Age. The age classification is based on the age of the woman at her last birthday.

Race. The population is divided into three groups on the basis of race: White, Black, and "other races." The last category includes American Indians, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and any other race except White and Black.

Women of Hispanic origin. Hispanic women were identified by a question that asked for self-identification of the women's origin or descent. Respondents were asked to select their origin (and the origin of other household members) from a "flash card" listing ethnic origins. Women of Hispanic origin, in particular, were those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin. It should be noted that Hispanic women can be of any race.

Years of school completed. Data on years of school completed were derived from the combination of answers to questions concerning the highest grade of school attended by the woman and whether or not that grade was finished. The questions on educational attainment apply only to progress in "regular" schools. Such schools include graded public and private elementary and high schools (both junior and senior high), colleges, universities, and professional schools, whether day schools or night schools. Thus, regular schooling is that which may advance a woman toward an elementary school certificate or a high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school degree. Schooling in other than regular schools was counted only if the credits obtained were regarded as transferable to a school in the regular school system.

Marital status. The marital status classification refers to the status at the time of enumeration. Women classified as "married" or "widowed" consist of those who remarried after having been divorced. Women classified as separated are either legally separated or otherwise absent from their spouse because of marital discord. Women in common-law marriages are classified as married, and women who are single or whose only marriage was annulled are classified as never married.

Year of divorce or separation. The year of divorce or separation reflects the year of marital dissolution. For women who were divorced or separated more than once, it is the year of most recent divorce or separation. For divorces that require a formal (legal) separation, the year reflects the year the actual divorce took place.

Children from an absent father. Children from an absent father are a woman's sons and daughters (including adopted children) whose father was not living in the same household. The questionnaire was designed to count children from an absent father only when at least one such child in the household is under 21 years of age.

Money income. Income distributions and income summary measures (such as medians and means) shown in this report are limited to money income before payment of Federal, State, local, or Social Security (FICA) taxes and before any other types of deductions, such as union dues and Medicare premiums. Total money income is the sum of the amounts received from wages and salaries, self-employment income (including losses), Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, interest, dividends, rent, royalties, estates or trusts, veterans' payments, unemployment and workers' compensations, private and government retirement and disability pensions, child support, alimony, and any other source of money income which was regularly received. Capital gains (or losses) and lump-sum or one-time payments such as life insurance settlements are excluded.

Poverty definition. Families and unrelated individuals are classified as being above or below the poverty level using the poverty index originated at the Social Security Administration in 1964 and revised by Federal Interagency Committees in 1969 and 1980. The poverty index is based solely on money income and does not reflect the fact that many low-income persons receive food stamps, Medicaid, and public housing.

The index is based on the Department of Agriculture's 1961 Economy Food Plan and reflects the different consumption requirements of families based on their size and composition. It was determined from the Department of Agriculture's 1955 Survey of Food Consumption that families of three or more persons spend approximately one-third of their income on food; the poverty level for these families was, therefore, set at three times the cost of the economy food plan. For smaller families and persons living alone, the cost of the economy food plan was multiplied by factors that were slightly higher in order to compensate for the relatively larger fixed expenses of these smaller households. The poverty thresholds are updated every year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The average poverty threshold for a family of four was $10,989 in 1985. Weighted average poverty thresholds by size of family are shown in table A-1. For further details, see Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 152.

Table A-1. Weighted Average Poverty Thresholds in 1985

Size of family unit	Threshold
One person (unrelated individual)	$ 5,469
15 to 64 years	5,593
65 years and over	5,156
Two persons	6,998
Householder 15 to 64 years	7,231
Householder 65 years and over	6,503
Three persons	8,573
Four persons	10,989
Five persons	13,007
Six persons	14,696
Seven persons	16,656
Eight persons	18,512
Nine persons or more	22,083

Computation of constant dollar means. The adjustment for price change was made by converting the mean income for women in 1983 into 1985 dollars on the basis of the change in the Consumer Price Index. The indices used to make the constant dollar conversions are shown in table A-2.

Table A-2. Consumer Price Index (CPI): 1977 to 1985

(1977 = 100)

Year	CPI	Year	CPI
1977	100.0	1981	150.1
1978	107.7	1982	159.3
1979	119.8	1983	164.4
1980	136.0	1984	171.4
		1985	177.5

Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is an index designed to measure changes in purchasing power. While the CPI is a good measure of the changes in prices, it is not necessarily a good measure of the changes in prices faced by consumers of different characteristics and income levels. Furthermore, the housing component of the CPI has been criticized for contributing to unduly large increases in the CPI over the past several years. These limitations should be noted when comparing income figures adjusted to constant dollars using the CPI since the same index was used for all women and all income levels.

Underreporting. As in most household surveys, the estimates of the number of money income recipients and the total amount of money income derived from the March CPS are somewhat less than comparable estimates derived from independent sources, such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Social Security Administration, and Veterans Administration. The difference between the survey estimate and the independent estimate is generally termed "underreporting." Underreporting tends to be more pronounced for income sources such as public assistance and welfare, unemployment compensation, and property income (interest, dividends, and net rental income). Estimates of income from wages and salaries tend to have less underreporting than most income types.

Appendix B. Source and Reliability of Estimates

SOURCE OF DATA

The estimates of child support and alimony in this report are based on data obtained in March and April 1986 from the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Bureau of the Census and from supplementary questions to the CPS. The present CPS sample was selected from the 1980 census files with coverage in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. The sample is continually updated to reflect new construction. The current sample is located in 729 areas comprising 1,973 counties, independent cities, and minor civil divisions in the Nation.

In the March sample, approximately 60,500 occupied households were eligible for interview. Of this number, about 2,500 occupied units were visited but interviews were not obtained because the occupants were not found at home after repeated calls or were unavailable for some other reason.

Questions relating to labor force participation are asked about each member in every sample household. In addition, in March 1986 supplementary questions were asked about income, and in April 1986 supplementary questions were asked about child support and alimony for previously divorced, currently separated, and never-married women. The CPS has eight rotation groups being interviewed in a month. In March, all eight rotations were asked income questions. In April, only the six rotations that were the same as in March were used to identify eligible women for the April supplement. About 42,200 of the households interviewed in March were interviewed again in April. Women 18 years of age and older were asked supplemental questions regarding child support and alimony payments. Of the 43,091 eligible women interviewed in March, 37,671 were matched to women interviewed in April. Child support and alimony information was imputed for the other 5,420 eligible women. Table B-1 gives the sample sizes and imputation rates by marital status.

CPS Estimation Procedure

The estimation procedure used in this survey involved the inflation of the weighted sample results to independent estimates of the total civilian noninstitutional population of the United States by age, race, sex, and Hispanic/non-Hispanic categories. These independent estimates are based on statistics from the 1980 decennial census; statistics on births, deaths, immigration and emigration; and statistics on the strength of the Armed Forces.

The estimates in this report are also based on revised Hispanic weighting procedure for persons of Hispanic origin. In previous years, the estimation procedures used in this survey involved the inflation of weighted sample results to independent estimates of the noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race. There was, therefore, no specific control of the survey estimates for the Hispanic population. During the last several years, the Bureau of the Census has developed independent population controls for the Hispanic population by sex and detailed age groups and has adopted revised weighting procedures to incorporate these new controls. It should be noted that the independent population estimates include some, but not all, illegal immigrants.

The estimation procedure for the data in the report also involves a further adjustment so that husband and wife of a household receive the same weight.

RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

Since the CPS estimates were based on a sample, they may differ somewhat from the figures that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same questionnaires, instructions, and enumerators. There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: sampling and nonsampling. The accuracy of a survey result depends on both types of errors, but the full extent of the nonsampling error is unknown. Consequently, particular care should be exercised in the interpretation of figures based on a relatively small number of cases or on small differences between estimates. The standard errors provided for the CPS estimates primarily indicate the magnitude of the sampling error. They also partially measure the effect of some nonsampling errors in responses and enumeration, but they do not measure any systematic biases in the data. (Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples, between the estimate and the desired value.)

Nonsampling variability. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources, e.g., inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, definitional difficulties, differences in the interpretation of questions, inability or unwillingness on the part of the respondents to provide correct information, inability to recall information, errors made in collection such as in recording or coding the data, errors made in processing the data, errors made in estimating values for missing data, and failure to represent all units with the sample (undercoverage).

Undercoverage in the CPS results from missed housing units and missed persons within sample households. Overall undercoverage, as compared to the level of the 1980 decennial census, is about 7 percent. It is known that CPS under-

coverage varies with age, sex, and race. Generally, undercoverage is larger for males than for females and larger for Blacks and other races combined than for Whites. Ratio estimation to independent age-sex-race-Hispanic population controls partially corrects for the bias due to survey undercoverage. However, biases exist in the estimates to the extent that missed persons in missed households or missed persons in interviewed households have different characteristics than interviewed persons in the same age-sex-race-Hispanic group. Further, the independent population controls used have not been adjusted for undercoverage in the 1980 census.

In these tabulations, the nonsampling error due to imputing values for missing data may be particularly severe. This is because the imputation rates for divorced and separated women are over 20 percent. Imputation procedures are intended to reduce nonsampling error due to missing data, but with such high imputation rates the procedures lose some effectiveness. Therefore, particular caution should be used in interpreting the data in these tabulations.

In most cases, the questionnaire entries for income are based on the memory or knowledge of one person. The most common respondent for this report was the female householder. The memory factor in data derived from field surveys of income probably produces underestimates because the tendency is to forget minor or irregular sources of income. Other errors of reporting are due to misrepresentation or to misunderstanding as to the scope of the income concept. See also the section entitled "Underreporting of Income" of an earlier report (Series P-60, No. 151.)

For additional information on nonsampling error including the possible impact on CPS data when known, refer to Statistical Policy Working Paper 3, *An Error Profile: Employment as Measured by the Current Population Survey*, Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1978, and Technical Paper 40, *The Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology*, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Sampling variability. The standard errors given in the following tables are primarily measures of sampling variability, that is, of the variations that occurred by chance because a sample rather than the entire population was surveyed. The sample estimate and its standard error enable one to construct confidence intervals, ranges that would include the average results of all possible samples with a known probability. For example, if all possible samples were selected, each of these being surveyed under essentially the same general conditions and using the same sample design, and if an estimate and its standard error were calculated from each sample, then:

1. Approximately 95 percent of the intervals from two standard errors below the estimate to two standard errors above the estimate would include the average result of all possible samples.

2. Approximately 90 percent of the intervals from 1.6 standard errors below the estimate to 1.6 standard errors above the estimate would include the average result of all possible samples.

The average estimate derived from all possible samples is or is not contained in any particular computed interval. However, for a particular sample, one can say with specified confidence that the average estimate derived from all possible samples is included in the confidence interval.

Standard errors may also be used to perform hypothesis testing, a procedure for distinguishing between population parameters using sample estimates. Tests may be performed at various levels of significance, where a level of significance is the probability of concluding that the characteristics are different when, in fact, they are identical.

To perform the most common test, let x and y be sample estimates for two characteristics of interest. Let the standard error on the difference x-y be S_{DIFF}. If the ratio $R = (x-y)/S_{DIFF}$ is between -2 and +2, no conclusion about the difference between the characteristics is justified at the 0.05 level of significance. If, however, this ratio is smaller than -2 or larger than +2, the observed difference is significant at the 0.05 level. In this event, it is commonly accepted practice to say that the characteristics are different. Of course, sometimes this conclusion will be wrong. When the characteristics are, in fact, the same, there is a 5-percent chance of concluding that they are different. For the other differences mentioned, the estimated difference between characteristics is between 1.6 and 2.0 times the standard error of the difference.

Note when using small estimates. Summary measures such as medians, means, and percentages are shown only when the base is 75,000 or greater. Because of the large standard errors involved, there is little chance that summary measures would reveal useful information when computed on a smaller base. Estimated numbers of persons are shown, however, even though the relative standard errors of these numbers are larger than those for corresponding summary measures. These smaller estimates are provided primarily to permit such combinations of the categories as serve each data user's needs.

Comparability of data. Data obtained from the CPS and other sources are not entirely comparable. This is due in large part to differences in interviewer training and experience and in differing survey processes. This is an additional component of error not reflected in the standard error tables. Therefore, caution should be used in comparing results between these different sources.

Table B-1. Sample Sizes and Imputation Rates

Marital status	Sample size	Imputation	
		Cases	Rates
Total	43,091	5,420	12.6
Married or widowed	30,536	3,197	10.5
Divorced	3,717	844	22.7
Separated	1,149	324	28.2
Never married	7,689	1,055	13.7

Standard error tables and their use. In order to derive standard errors that would be applicable to a larger number of estimates and which could be prepared at a moderate cost, a number of approximations were required. Therefore, instead of providing an individual standard error for each estimate, generalized sets of standard errors are provided for various types of characteristics. As a result, the sets of standard errors provided give an indication of the order of magnitude of the standard error of an estimate rather than the precise standard error.

The figures presented in table B-2 are approximations to the standard errors of various estimates of levels for women in the United States. To obtain the approximate standard error for a specific characteristic, the appropriate standard error in tables B-2 and B-3 must be multiplied by the factor for that characteristic given in table B-4. These factors must be applied to the generalized standard errors in order to adjust for the combined effect of the sample design and the estimating procedure on the value of the characteristic.

Standard errors for intermediate values not shown in the generalized tables of standard errors may be approximated by linear interpolation.

Two parameters (denoted "a" and "b") are used to calculate standard errors for each type of characteristic; they are presented in table B-4. These parameters were used to calculate the standard errors in tables B-2 and B-3 and to calculate the factors in table B-4. They also may be used to directly calculate the standard errors for estimated numbers and percentages. Methods for computation are given in the following sections.

Standard errors of estimated numbers. The approximate standard error, S_x, of an estimated number shown in this report can be obtained in two ways. It may be obtained by use of the formula

$$S_x = fs \qquad (1)$$

Table B-2. Standard Errors of Estimated Numbers of Women: 1985

(Numbers in thousands)

Size of estimate	Standard error	Size of estimate	Standard error
10	5	6,000	125
75	14	7,000	134
250	26	8,000	142
500	37	9,000	150
1,000	52	10,000	157
2,000	74	11,000	164
3,000	90	12,000	170
4,000	103	13,000	176
5,000	114	15,000	187
		17,000	196

Note: For a particular characteristic, see table B-4 for the appropriate factor to apply to the above standard errors. For reference, the standard errors in tables B-2 and B-3 were calculated using a = -0.0000030 and b = 2,769.

where f is the appropriate factor from table B-4, and S is the standard error on the estimate obtained by interpolation from table B-2. Alternatively, the standard error may be approximated by formula (2), from which the standard errors in table B-2 were calculated. Use of this formula will provide more accurate results than the use of formula (1) above.

$$S_x = \sqrt{ax^2 + bx} \qquad (2)$$

Here, x is the size of the estimate, and a and b are the parameters in table B-4 associated with the particular characteristic.

Standard errors of estimated percentages. The reliability of an estimated percentage computed, using sample data for both numerator and denominator, depends upon both the size of the percentage and the size of the total upon which this percentage is based. Estimated percentages are relatively more reliable than the corresponding estimates of the

Table B-3. Standard Errors of Estimated Percentages of Women: 1985

Base of estimated percentage (thousands)	Estimated percentage				
	2 or 98	5 or 95	10 or 90	25 or 75	50
75	2.7	4.2	5.8	8.3	9.6
200	1.7	2.6	3.5	5.1	5.9
300	1.4	2.1	2.9	4.2	4.8
400	1.2	1.8	2.5	3.6	4.2
500	1.0	1.6	2.2	3.2	3.7
600	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.9	3.4
800	0.8	1.3	1.8	2.6	2.9
1,000	0.7	1.2	1.6	2.3	2.6
1,200	0.7	1.1	1.4	2.1	2.4
1,500	0.6	0.9	1.3	1.9	2.2
2,000	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.6	1.9
3,000	0.4	0.7	0.9	1.3	1.5
4,000	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.3
5,000	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.2
10,000	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8
15,000	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.7
17,000	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.6

Note: For a particular characteristic, see table B-4 for the appropriate factor to apply to the above standard errors.

numerators of the percentages, particularly if the percentages are 50 percent or more. When the numerator and denominator of the percentage are in different categories, use the factor or parameters from table B-4 indicated by the numerator. The approximate standard error, $S_{(x,p)}$, of an estimated percentage can be obtained by use of the formula

$$S_{(x,p)} = fs \qquad (3)$$

In this formula, f is the appropriate factor from table B-4 and S is the standard error on the estimate from table B-3. Alternatively, the standard error may be approximated by the following formula, from which the standard errors in table B-3 were calculated. Use of this formula will give more accurate results than use of formula (3) above.

$$S_{(x,p)} = \sqrt{(b/x)\ (p)\ (100-p)} \qquad (4)$$

Here, x is the size of the subclass of women which is the base of the percentage, p is the percentage ($0 < p < 100$), and b is the parameter in table B-4 associated with the particular characteristic in the numerator of the percentage.

Standard error of a difference. For a difference between two sample estimates, the standard error is approximately equal to

$$S_{(x-y)} = \sqrt{S_x^2 + S_y^2} \qquad (5)$$

where S_x and S_y are the standard errors of the estimates x and y, respectively. The estimates can be of numbers, percents, ratios, etc. This will represent the actual standard error quite accurately for the difference between two estimates of the same characteristic in two different areas, or for the difference between separate and uncorrelated characteristics in the same area. If, however, there is a high positive (negative) correlation between the two characteristics, the formula will overestimate (underestimate) the true standard error.

Standard error of a median. The sampling variability of an estimated median depends upon the form of the distribution as well as the size of its base. An approximate method for measuring the reliability of an estimated median is to determine a confidence interval about it. (See the section on sampling variability for a general discussion of confidence intervals.) The following procedure may be used to estimate the 68-percent confidence limits of a median based on sample data.

(1) Determine, using the standard error tables and factors or formula (4), the standard error of the estimate of 50 percent from the distribution.

(2) Add to and subtract from 50 percent the standard error determined in step (1).

Table B-4. "a" and "b" Parameters and "f" Factors for Calculating Approximate Standard Errors of Estimated Numbers and Percentages of Women: 1985

Characteristic	Parameter a	Parameter b	f factor
INCOME			
Women			
Total or White	-0.000030	2,769	1.00
Black	-0.000243	3,165	1.07
Hispanic[1]	-0.000839	5,334	1.39
Families			
Total or White	-0.000028	2,527	0.96
Black	-0.000212	2,755	1.00
Hispanic[1]	-0.000731	4,643	1.29
Women Below the Poverty Level			
Total or White	-0.000141	12,834	2.15
Black	-0.000985	12,834	2.15
Hispanic[1]	-0.003404	21,629	2.79
NONINCOME			
Number of Women with Children Whose Fathers are Absent			
Marital status:			
Total or White	-0.000066	5,972	1.47
Black	-0.000658	8,566	1.76
Hispanic[1]	-0.002272	14,436	2.28
Selected characteristics of women:			
Educational attainment	-0.000034	3,075	1.05
Employment	-0.000025	2,294	0.91
Unemployment	-0.000032	2,934	1.03
Selected characteristics of families:			
Tenure	-0.000026	2,365	0.92

Note: The f factor must be multiplied by the standard error obtained in tables B-2 and B-3 for the characteristic of interest. To obtain standard error parameters by residence, multiply the above parameters by a factor of 1.0 for metropolitan residence, 1.5 for nonmetropolitan residence, 0.75 for Northeast; 0.92 for Midwest; 1.03 for South; 1.07 for West; and 0.91 for the North and West combined.

[1]Hispanic women may be of any race.

(3) Using the distribution of the characteristic, calculate the 68-percent confidence interval by calculating the values corresponding to the two points established in step (2).

(4) Once the limits of the 68-percent confidence interval are computed, the standard error of a median can be computed by the formula

$$S_{median} = \frac{U - L}{2}$$

where

U = Upper limit of the 68-percent confidence interval.

L = Lower limit of the 68-percent confidence interval.

Standard error of an estimated arithmetic mean. The standard error of an arithmetic mean can be approximated by formula (6) below. Because of the approximations used in developing formula (6), an estimate of the standard error of the mean obtained from that formula will generally underestimate the true standard error. The formula used to estimate the standard error of a mean is

$$S_{\bar{x}} = \sqrt{(b/y)\, S^2} \qquad (6)$$

In this formula, y is the size of the base of the distribution, and b is a parameter which depends on the sample size, the sample design, the estimation procedure, and the characteristic. The values of b are given in table B-4. The variance, s^2, is given by the following formula:

$$S^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{c} p_i \, \bar{x}_i^2 - \bar{x}^2 \qquad (7)$$

where $\bar{x}$ is the mean of the distribution estimated by the expression

$$\bar{x} = \sum_{i=1}^{c} p_i \, x_i$$

c is the number of groups; i indicates a specific group, thus taking on values 1 through c;

p_i is the estimated proportion of women whose values, for the characteristic (x-values) being considered, fall in group i.

$\bar{x}_i = (Z_{i-1} + Z_i)/2$ where Z_{i-1} and Z_i are the lower and upper interval boundaries, respectively, for group i. This is assumed to be the most representative value for the characteristic for women in group i. Group c is open-ended, i.e., no upper interval boundary exists. For this group an approximate average value is $x_c = \frac{3}{2} Z_{c-1}$

*U.S. G.P.O. 1987-181-064/60047